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Message Text

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PAGE 01 MAPUTO 01145 071417Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
----------000807 071420Z /44
O P 071215Z SEP 78
FM AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7372
INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY GABORONE PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY LAGOS PRIORITY
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L MAPUTO 1145

EXDIS

FROM LOW

E.O.11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV, RH, US, UK
SUBJECT: RHODESIA: IMPACT OF THE VISCOUNT DISASTER

1. IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO UNDERESTIMATE THE IMPACT OF THE CRASH SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, OF THE RHODESIAN AIRLINES VISCOUNT FROM KARIBA AND SUBSEQUENT MURDER OF 10 OF THE SURVIVORS BY GUERRILLA FORCES. THE ANGER FRUSTRATION AND EMOTIONAL RESPONSE BY THE WHITE POPULATION IS PROBABLY GREATER THAN FOLLOWING THE VUMBA MASSACRE OF LAST JUNE. TEMPERS ARE RUNNING HIGH AND MANY WHITES WANT TO THREATEN AND LASH BACK. VARIOUS SUGGESTIONS HAVE BEEN MADE TO RESPONSIBLE OFFICIALS TO MASSACRE BLACK, BOMB ZAMBIA, AND ATTACK FOREIGN CIVILIAN AIRCRAFT. AN AFRICAN WAS SHOT BY A WHITE MAN IN THE STREETS OF SALISBURY YESTERDAY.

2. THE WHITE BACKLASH HAS BEEN STIMULATED BY NKOMO'S BOAST
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ING OVER RADIO ZAMBIA THAT HIS FORCES HAD SHOT DOWN THE AIR CRAFT THOUGH HE DENIED THEY WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE SUBSEQUENT MURDER OF THE SURVIVORS. LATER THE SALISBURY PRESS REPORTED THAT CALISTUS NDLOVA IN NEW YORK CLAIMED CREDIT FOR THAT TOO.

3. THE IMMEDIATE EFFECT OF THE INCIDENT IS TO RENDER IMPOSSIBLE

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FOR THE NEXT FEW WEEKS ANY FURTHER NEGOTIATION BETWEEN SMITH AND NKOMO IN THE CONTEXT OF PRIVATE TALKS OR AN ALL PARTIES MEETING. AFTER THEIR INITIAL ANGER, MANY WHITES ARE BEGINNING TO REFLECT THAT THE INCIDENT DRAMATISES THE SHARP DETERIORATION IN THE SECURITY SITUATION. WHETHER OR NOT THE PLANE WAS BROUGHT DOWN WITH A MISSABLE, MANY BELIEVE IT WAS, AND THEY REALIZE THAT THIS MEANS THAT CIVIL AIR TRAVEL BETWEEN OUTLYING CITIES OF RHODESIA AND SALISBURY IS NO LONGER SAFE. AUTOMOBILE TRAVEL HAS LONG BEEN DANGEROUS EVEN THE UNDER PROTECTION OF CONVOYS. OTHERS HAVE COMMENDED THAT THE FACT THAT IN THIS LARGE AREA NOT ONE AFRICAN WAS WILLING TO HELP THE SURVIVORS IS ANOTHER COMMENTARY ON THE COMPLETE ABSENCE OF SUPPORT FOR THE GOVERNMENT IN THE TALKS.

4. I THEREFORE BELIEVE THAT ALTHOUGH THE IMMEDIATE IMPACT OF THE CRASH IS TO REINFORCE OPPOSITION TO NEGOTIATIONS WITH PF WHICH RESULTED FROM SITHOLE'S ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE SMITH NKOMO MEETING, THE LONGER RANGE EFFECT WILL BE TOWARDS. RECONSIDERATION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF NEGOTIATIONS WITH IT.
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Message Attributes

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Control Number: n/a
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Draft Date: 07 sep 1978
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